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Message Text

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67
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13898

FOLG RECD FROM CALCUTTA ACTION DELHI, INFO BOMBAY, MADRAS
RPTD FOR YOUR INFO.

QUOTE;

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 2318

E.O. 40652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJ: CHIEF MINISTER RAY

REF: CALCUTTA 2299

1. MEETING OF WEST BENGAL CONGRESS LEADERS WITH MRS. GANDHI IN DELHI ADJOURNED AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 18 WITH CALL BY THE PRIME MINISTER FOR UNITY AMONG THE DIFFERENT FACTIONS OF THE PARTY AND THE PAR Y AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF ANY CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP IN THE STATE GOVERNMENT OR OF THE FORMATION OF AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (SEE REFTEL). CHIEF MINISTER RAY IS SCHEDULED TO INAUGURATE TODAY SEPTEMBER 20 A TWO DAY CONFERENCE IN CALCUTTA OF SOME 600 WEST BENGAL CONG-RESS WORKERS. PAPERS QUOTE WEST BENGAL CONGRESS PRESIDENT MOITRA AS FUYING THAT THE AGENDA FOR THE CONFERENCE WILL BE INVOLVEMENT OF THE STATE CONGRESS AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 20 POINT PROGRAM, PROBLEMS OF WEST BENGAL'S
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DEVELOPMENT, AND PARTICIPATION OF THE PARTY'S STUDENT, Y UTH

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AND LABOR WINGS IN DEVELOPMENT WORK.

2. EVERYONE HERE AGREES THAT RAY WON LAST SATURDAY'S ROUND IN THE STRUGGLE WITH HIS OPPONENTS; HE REMAINS CHIEF MINISTER AND MANAGED TO KILL THE IDEA OF AN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. SOME ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THE FACT THAT AT THE CLOSE OF SATURDAY'S MEETING MRS. GANDHI AND RAY LEFT TOGETHER, WHICH IF SEEN AS AN INDKA-TION THAT THE CHIEF MINISTER ENJOYS THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT.

3. ON THE QUESTION OF WHETHER RAY HAS WEATHERED THE CRISIS AND IS NOW OUT DANGER, OPINION HERE IS DIVIDED. SOME THINK THAT THE CHIEF MINISTER'S POSITION IS SECURE NOW AND THAT HE CAN STAY ON VIRTUALLY AS LONG AS HE WANTS, THOUGH THEY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WAS THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGE RAY HAD FACED SINCE BECOMING CHIEF MINISTER. OTHERS SAY THAT THINGS ARE SETTLED ONLY FOR A FEW WEEKS, AND THAT AFTER THE PUJAS AGZ PAST THE QUESTION OF RAY'S CONTINUATION IN OFFICE WILL AGAIN ARISE. ALMOST EVERYONE HERE CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT SANJAY AND HIS LOCAL HEINHMAN KAMAL NATH STILL WANT RAY OUT AND WILL HAVE ANOTHER TRY AT HIM AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.
KORN UNQUOTE.
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